

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 01598 01 OF 02 260758Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /058 W
-----260922Z 123272 /11
R 251559Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 156
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 THE HAGUE 1598

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PGOV PINT NL
SUBJECT: CABINET CRISIS: HOW TO PUT HUMPTY TOGETHER AGAIN

REF: THE HAGUE 1519

1. TWO DAYS AFTER THE FALL OF THE DUTCH CABINET, QUEEN JULIANA IS BUSILY RECEIVING A LONG LINE OF ADVISORS AND POLITICIANS AS SHE SEEKS GUIDANCE ON THE BEST WAY TO RECONSTITUTE A GOVERNMENT FOR THE TWO MONTHS REMAINING BEFORE THE MAY 25 ELECTIONS. HER TASK, WHICH EARLIER LOOKED EASY ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG POLITICIANS FOR RESOLVING THE CRISIS, NOW SEEMS MORE DIFFICULT. SHE IS GETTING A WIDE ARRAY OF PREFERRED OPTIONS, SOME FIVE OR SIX BY OUR COUNT.

2. A PARADE OF POLITICIANS TROOPED TO THE HIS TEN BOSCH PALCE IN THE HAGUE YESTERDAY FOR SHORT MEETINGS WITH THE QUEEN. IT APPEARS THAT PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS FROM EVERY PARTY, EVEN INCLUDING INDEPENDENT ONE-MAN DELEGATIONS, (16 IN ALL) ARE TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THEIR POINTS AND TO GET SOME FREE PUBLIC EXPOSURE BY GOING TO SEE THE QUEEN. THE NUMBER OF CALLERS AND THE CONFLICTING ADVICE THEY
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 THE HA 01598 01 OF 02 260758Z

ARE OFFERING MAKE IT PROBABLE THAT A DECISION WILL NOT BE ANNOUNCED BEFORE SOME TIME NEXT WEEK. SHE IS SCHEDULED TO SEE DEN UYL ON MONDAY.

3. A CLEAR SPLIT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE MEMBERS OF THE LAST GOVERNMENT ON HOW TO STRUCTURE THE INTERIM CABINET. CATHOLIC (KVP) AND ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY (ARP) LEADERS ARE

PLUMPING FOR THE FORMAL APPOINTMENT OF "DEN UYL CABINET IIM" THE PROPOSAL, WHICH HAS FEW OTHER SUPPORTERS, WOULD SEE THE LAST CABINET SWORN INTO OFFICE AGAIN WITH A NEW, LIMITED PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, AND WHILE SOME OF THE MORE CONTROVERSIAL BILLS LEFT HANGING BY THE FALL OF DEN UYL CABINET I, INCLUDING EXCESS PROFITS LEGISLATION AND LAND-USE POLICY, WOULD NOT BE DEALT WITH, OTHERS SUCH AS WORKER COUNCILS AND THE INVESTMENT LAW WOULD BE. A DEN UYL II SOLUTION WOULD GIVE THE COUNTRY A FULLY OPERATING AND LEGALLY UNQUESTIONED GOVERNMENT FOR THE INTERIM. FOR THE KVP AND ARP IT WOULD REUNITE THE CABINET AND OPTICALLY AT LEAST REMOVE SOME OF THE ONUS THEY NOW BEAR FOR HAVING BROUGHT IT DOWN.

4. WHILE ATTRACTIVE FOR THE KVP AND THE ARP, DEN UYL II IS NOT SO FOR MOST OTHER PARTIES, INCLUDING THE THIRD CDA PARTNER, THE CHU. THE PROPOSAL HAS COME UNDER SHARP ATTACK FROM THE DUTCH LEFT. LABOR PARTY FLOOR LEADER VAN THIJN, WHO LIKE MOST OTHERS ON THE LEFT PREFERS THAT THE QUEEN OPT FOR A "DEMISSIONAIRE" (CARETAKER) CABINET COMPOSED OF THE SAME MINISTERS WHO WERE IN THE DEN UYL I CABINET, CLAIMS THAT DEN UYL II SOLUTION WOULD BE A FRAUD. HE FEELS THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND PROGRESSIVE MINISTERS WAS BADLY DAMAGED BY THE VAN AGT-INSPIRED WALKOUT. TO PUT THE GROUP FORMALLY BACK TOGETHER WOULD NOT TRULY REPRESENT THE SAD STATE OF LEFT-CENTER RELATIONS. THE LABOR PARTY AND OTHERS IN THE DUTCH LEFT LIKE THE COMMUNISTS (CPN) AND RADICALS (PPR) WANT A CARETAKER SOLUTION, EVEN IF IT MEANS ABANDONING SOME OF THE SOCIALISTS' CHERISHED LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS. THEY WANT TO EMPHASIZE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 THE HA 01598 01 OF 02 260758Z

THAT THINGS ARE NOT THE SAME AND TO MAKE CLEAR TO VOTERS THAT VAN AGT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR TORPEDOING DEN UYL. THE LABOR PARTY BELIEVES IT HAS A GOOD ELECTORAL ISSUE.

5. IN ADDITION TO CARETAKER AND DEN UYL II SOLUTIONS, BOTH OF WHICH INVOLVE THE SAME GOVERNING TEAM, ONE PARTY (DS'70) WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A RUMP CABINET OF ONLY PROGRESSIVES, WHILE THE OPPOSITION LIBERALS (VVD) ARGUE FOR WHAT MIGHT BEST BE DESCRIBED AS A "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY," I.E. THEY WANT A PIECE OF THE ACTION ALSO. MOST GUESSES AT THE MOMENT ARE ON CARETAKER STATUS OR DEN UYL II, BUT THE POSSIBILITIES ARE SO VARIED THAT ANYONE OF THE PROPOSALS OR A COMPLETELY

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PAGE 01 THE HA 01598 02 OF 02 260758Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 THE HAGUE 1598

NEW ONE COULD BE SELECTED.

6. ONE ITEM ALLPARTIES AGREE IS IS THE NEED FOR A DECISION ON PARLIAMENT. PROPONENTS OF ALL OPTIONS AGREE THAT PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE DISSOLVED BY ELECTION DAY. IF GOVERNMENT HAD NOT FALLEN, PARLIAMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN DISSOLVED WITH THE PASSAGE OF A BILL PROVIDING FOR ELCTION OF THE FIRST CHAMBER AT THE SAME TIME AS THE SECOND CHAMBER (A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN DUTCH CONSTITUTION WHICH WOULD REQUIRE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT). IT NOW LOOKS AS IF GOVERNMENT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PROCEED WITH THIS LEGISLATION AND THERE IS SOME CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION WHETHER A CARETAKER CABINET HAS THE POWER TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT. IT IS IS NOT DONE PRIOR TO THE ELECTION, THE CURRENT PARLIAMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO SIT UNTIL THE NEW PARLIAMENTARY YEAR EGINS IN SEPTEMBER. ALL PARTIES AGREE THAT THIS WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE FOLLOWING ELCTION OF A NEW LOWER HOUSE IN MAY. THUS THEY ARE ALL ARGUING, REGARDLESS OF THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT BETWEEN NOW AND MAY 25, THAT A DECISION SHOULD BE TAKEN NOW TO ENSURE PARLIAMENTARY DISSOLUTION BY THE ELECTION SO THAT THE NEWLY CHOSEN LOWER HOUSE COULD BE SWORN IN AND INVOLVED IN THE POST-ELECTORAL CABINET FORMATION.

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PAGE 02 THE HA 01598 02 OF 02 260758Z

7. THE QUEEN, WHO NORMALLY ENJOYS A MORE CEREMONIAL ROLE, IS NOW AT THE CENTER OF THE ACTION. BESIDES POLITICAL ADVISORS (AND SHE HAS MORE THAN ENOUGH POLITICIANS WILLING TO GIVE HER ADVICE AT THE MOMENT) SHE HAS LITTLE TO FALL BACK ON FOR PRIVATE ADVICE AND COUNSEL. WHAT SHE DOES NOW IS, BY TRADITION, REFERRED TO AS THE "SECRET OF SOESTDIJK."

NEXT WEEK WILL TELL.
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